DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 329 456 SO 021 105

AUTHOR Gleeson, Kristin Brownsey
TITLE The Minister's Right Arm: The Role of Women's Missionary Societies in the Presbyterian Church.
PUB DATE 90
NOTE 26p.
PUB TYPE Reports - Descriptive (141)

EDRS PRICE MF01/PC02 Plus Postage.
DESCRIPTORS *Church Programs; Church Workers; Females; Protestants; Religion Studies; Religious Cultural Groups; Religious Organizations; *Social Change; Social History; United States History; *Womens Studies
IDENTIFIERS *Missionaries; *Presbyterian Church

ABSTRACT

The largest mass women's movement of the 19th century was the women's mission movement. Initially, in the early 1800s, the concerns the mission societies addressed were mainly parochial, such as raising money to support young men in their theological studies. Gradually, women's mission societies began expanding their interests to a more public realm. These interests included providing funds and goods to be used by specific missionaries and missionary wives whom each group sponsored. The mission societies grew in size and sophistication of structure as the century progressed; and, correspondingly, the interests of the societies increased in scope and their influence on the church grew. Women's mission societies became very interested in the work of missionaries in foreign lands; they sought to provide financial, emotional, and spiritual support. Through this work, women's missions helped to broaden and educate the cultural perceptions of small towns in the United States. By the end of the nineteenth century, women's mission societies had formed elaborate structures including the regional boards that covered the United States. Although the women involved in the mission societies may not have pressed the case for equality as women of the 20th century did, their contributions and experiences were important in helping to shape the future of U.S. women as they functioned with increasing competence, confidence, and ability outside the home. (DB)

****
* Reproductions supplied by EDRS are the best that can be made *
* from the original document. *
****

ED329456

THE MINISTER'S RIGHT ARM:
The Role of Women's Missionary Societies in the Presbyterian Church

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION
Office of Educational Research and Improvement
EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES INFORMATION CENTER (ERIC)

This document has been reproduced as received from the person or organization originating it.

Minor changes have been made to improve reproduction quality.

Points of view or opinions stated in this document do not necessarily represent official OERI position or policy.

"PERMISSION TO REPRODUCE THIS MATERIAL HAS BEEN GRANTED BY
KRISTIN
BROWNSEY-GLEASON
TO THE EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES INFORMATION CENTER (ERIC)."

SO 021 105

BEST COPY AVAILABLE

THE MINISTER'S RIGHT ARM:
The Role of Women's Missionary Societies
in the Presbyterian Church

The women's mission movement was the largest mass women's movement in the 19th Century. It far outstripped its closest competitor, the Women's Christian Temperance Union. By 1915 the women's foreign mission movement alone counted for more than 3 million dues-paying members. Presbyterian women were fully active in this massive mission effort and helped to shape the nature and direction of its development in the nation and the world as a whole, and in turn fostered their own personal development. By the turn of the century the Presbyterians had women's mission boards in every region in the United States administering programs and providing a network link with the local societies.[1]

American involvement in mission work dates back to the Puritans. In spite of these early beginnings women did not officially become involved in missions until 1800 when the Boston Female Missionary Society was formed. Reform and benevolent societies had been organized previously in the eighteenth century but they were for the most part composed of men. Women's roles were largely limited to encouraging the men, praying for the societies, and attending the annual sermons. [2]

By the turn of the century, because of societal changes, ministers were experiencing a transition in their role and function in the church. The decreased influence and involvement of the church in political aspects of society led the minister to

seek the bulk of his support from his congregation instead of political institutions. Many ministers were also heavily involved in the fashionable practice of publishing their sermons which increased their reliance on the congregation for fulfilling some of the more benevolent functions. The congregation was also undergoing change. Losing much of its male constituency to the press of secular demands, the church in effect was becoming a predominantly female congregation. Some clergy, recognizing their changing role and the loss of male members, accepted female assistance in the work of the Church.[3]

The Protestant churches were also experiencing revivalist currents which, coupled with an increasing millenial conviction in this period, gave rise to organizing societies dedicated to missionizing and reforming the world. These societies also helped to address the problems of social and political changes of urbanization, industrialization, immigration and westward movement. Women answered the call and formed organizations devoted to a society who saw the role of women as the bastion and caretaker of the family's moral and religious development. A Church constituted society or group was also one of the few approved outlets for self development and expression outside of the home. Combined with the growing perception emphasizing women's role in religion and morals, this mission emphasis pointed to missionary societies as a natural area for female concern.[4]

Generally, the work of women within these organizations was

encouraged and approved as part of the natural extension of women's religious and maternal role in society. The earliest Presbyterian women's missionary societies were formed in Pennsylvania and New York in the first two decades of the 19th century. These organizations had their origins in the cent societies which were founded about 1802. The cent mission societies based their fund raising on the premise that the accumulation of enough single pennies could collectively amount to significant contributions. They met once a year and usually had a simple organizational structure designed to raise money to be forwarded to another institution. The Presbyterian Female Cent Society of Hopewell, NJ, in one instance, used half of their funds for the Theological Society in Princeton to assist the "poor pious young men in the prosecution of their studies" and the other half to establish a female library for the use of the members of the society.[5]

This successful concept of cumulative effort proved the basis for the growing number of women's missionary societies. Initially involving men these benevolent societies quickly became identified as a strictly female endeavor. Women welcomed the opportunity to gain a more active role in the church. Melinda Rankin, a Presbyterian church woman recalled her feelings as a young adult when she resented the restricted role of women and "almost rebelled against the heavenly Father at the limited sphere which he seemed to have allotted me." The number of societies slowly grew as women like Melinda Rankin expanded their

energies beyond just raising funds.[6]

Objections to and suspicions of these activities were expressed by some ministers and laymen. One minister called the societies "ostentatious" and "not serviceable." Another offered the opinion that it would not be easy to find officers for the societies. In his words "for president, you must have a fearless, loud-voiced woman; for secretary, one whose husband can write good letters and reports," a statement which also seems to imply a shortage of married men who could write good letters and reports. Some strongly insisted that the minister be present when the women prayed because "there was no telling what these misguided females would ask for if left alone."[7]

While not stepping out of their sphere and emphasizing "womanly concerns" in the beginning, women's missionary societies gradually began expanding their interests to a more public realm. Initially the women responded by providing funds and goods for use by specific missionaries and missionary wives whom each group sponsored. They packed boxes that clothed and provided supplies for the field workers and their families. Support quickly expanded to sponsorship of missionary preaching tours.[8]

A highly sophisticated structure, unique in the antebellum period, was developed by the Female Missionary Society of the Western District (FMSWD) formed in 1815 at Utica, New York. Organized by Presbyterian and Congregational women, the society not only hired missionaries but developed branch societies. A revival at a church had provided the context for its

organization. The initial work, recorded in an 1818 published report boasted branch societies in five counties of Western New York with a total membership of over 1500 women. Their constitution, also included in the report, designated that 15 women be elected by majority vote at the annual meeting. These women, serving as trustees, would manage and transact business guided by the instructions from the committee. Included in their responsibilities was the approval and appointment of missionaries. Although the missionaries appointed were male, an important part of their work was to organize and establish branch female missionary societies. These men, as a consequence, were not only employed by women but also working to expand a female network. This unusual arrangement was a contradiction of the view of gender position at the time, but perhaps reflected the concept of women's moral superiority.[9]

The annual report of the FMSWD of 1817, besides including reports of the missionaries, also stated the overall framework of the mission program. During the previous year they had employed eight missionaries varying from one to twelve months employment. Appointed to specific counties or towns the missionaries were directed to give religious instruction, distribute tracts and Bibles, preach, administer sacraments and aid in the organization of both church and female missionary branch societies. Henry Smith, a missionary, reported "my first attempt in the formation of Branches was here (Cayuga). I had only to explain its views and tendencies when a society was organized, which increased to

eighty before I left the village. A second was put in operation at Auburn, and a third at Montezuma, where $13 was contributed."[10]

The receipts for September 1817, collected from twenty-eight branches, were almost $2000. Recognizing the importance of publishing the report for recruiting new members, the FMSWD published 1000 copies in 1817. In one of the few extant speeches of a Presbyterian woman in the early nineteenth century, the secretary, Ann Breese, stated in the report the case for women's missionary organizations. She emphasized that women's equal share in the redemption should therefore also point to an equal responsibility to defuse the grace of redeemer. Breese also noted that Jesus included women among his followers and she defended the FMSWD on the grounds of the benefits of collective action and the capability and considerable knowledge of the female members. Although women could seek the counsel of men she stressed that women had the experience, skill and knowledge to operate a missionary society. After twelve years of administering a successful missionary program the FMSWD, relinquishing all power and control, was absorbed by the male operated Western Domestic Missionary Society. The goal of expansion was accomplished through the absorption, but it was at the sacrifice of female participation. With the exception of the FMSWD most antebellum mission organizations retained a simple organizational structure or assumed auxiliary status to male societies.[11]

By the mid-nineteenth century almost every congregation had

a women's missionary society. As these missionary enterprises broadened, the Presbyterian women's organizations began to align themselves with the official boards and agencies of the church and their planned projects. The boards in turn became increasingly dependent on their financial support. The need to establish schools and hospitals was seen as a particularly appropriate area in which women's missionary societies could lend assistance. Administrators and ministers alike, recognizing the past success of the cent and mite societies, openly solicited the aid of these women by appealing to their concern for the education and the medical needs of women and children.[12]

In order to arouse interest and support, stories and letters from missionaries were used which would appeal to the maternal instincts and feelings of sisterhood for the "heathen" women. The appeals for help were couched in dramatic terms describing the desperate situation of the heathen women and their children. They emphasized the degradation of women. Missionary exposes of treatment of women in Oriental society assumed prominent positions in the press. The articles focused on infanticide, prohibition of female education, childhood marriages, extreme isolation and sequesteration of women, sati and footbinding. The Rev. J.M. Deputie, a black missionary, described a practice in Liberia:

> Soon after the child is born, it is gorged, by its mother, on rice boiled soft and then it is laid on a mat, oftener on the ground, in the sun, greased with palm oil from head to

> foot. there it has to lie for hours at a time, no one appearing to care for it. This is repeated every day until the child can feed itself and may properly be called the process of hardening.[13]

A missionary in China, Mrs. Baldwin described the practice of infanticide in a letter later published in a mission periodical. The letter describes how, while mourning for the loss of her own child a Chinese women named Jong Chuo sought to comfort Mrs. Baldwin and express her understanding for Mrs. Baldwin's grief by relating the grief in her own past:

> This woman belonged to the large-footed and working women of China. She had been accustomed from her earliest year to gather fuel upon the mountain sides, to plow, sow and reap. All that hard labor which we are accustomed in this favored land to see the stronger sex perform, fell to the share of Jong Chuo and her sister of the same class....[Jong Chuo related] When I was very young I was married to a man whom I did not know. As is the custom my husband and I prayed to the gods for a son. My first child came, but alas! it was a little girl Oh how I loved it right away! I was a beautiful child, so large and bright looking that my heart was full of love for it, but my husband was very angry because it was not a boy and said he would not have it. He went out and brought in a tub of water, bringing it right near to my bed, and then he came to take my little girl away from me to drown her. Oh, how I besought him not to kill her. I held

> her tight fast in my arms, reasoning with him and telling him if he would let her live we could sell her for a wife, but he would not heed me and was very angry. He took her from me and put her head down into the water. I heard the gurgling sound in her throat. I shut my eyes and stopped my ears, but still heard the dreadful sound. He pushed her head down once, twice, thrice --then all was still and I had no little girl. Oh how heavy was my grief....My house people said I had failed in some offerings and the gods were angry, and so I made them larger offerings, hoping that the next time they would give me a son. A second child came and it was a girl. Again my husband was very angry and again the same sad thing, he drowned my child....[14]

Besides the concern for the plight of "heathen women," expressed, for most, in terms of a physical nature, there was as often a demonstrated concern for their low status in their society. The American mission perception of the status of Asian women was described early in the century:

> In the age of comparative childhood she is given in marriage, without having ever seen her husband; and then, indeed, she becomes a bond slave for life. She never sits to eat with her husband, but prepares his food for him, and partakes of what he leaves. She never appears in public company; she is, in fact, a mere animal, kept for burden or for slaughter in the house of her husband.[15]

The concern was often ironically accompanied by praise and

thanks for the favorable contrast to women's status in American society, a development some writers attributed to Christianity. The link to Christianity was seen as a mission tool to liberate women. In some sense this may explain the concurrence many women showed to this assumption of equal status that was not a reality in America. The concern American women felt for these "heathen women," while exhorting their Christian sisters to help, was usually expressed in terms that implied a common bond of gender. This language of sisterhood which in many cases was seen as "big sister" helping "little sister," nonetheless clearly implied American women at least felt a common denominator. That common denominator could be attributed to capacity to bear children which women share universally.

The language of sisterhood, however, was often accompanied by the belief of the equality of American men and women at home. In 1836 the Board of Foreign Mission implored:

> To you, Christian sisters, these pages are particularly addressed. It is in your power to do much for this blessed cause. It is your duty to do much for it, because the Gospel has done so much for you. It is also your highest honor to be engaged. The first missionary society on record was a female missionary society. ...
> What has caused this difference between your condition and hers. We need not tell you that it is the Gospel of Jesus Christ. But this Gospel must be sent to them....[16]

At the formation of the Female Society for the Support of a

Female School in India a preamble was written in which the issue of equality of women and men was also addressed:

> It is among the excellent effects of the Christian religion, that it elevates the female sex to their proper rank in society, and gives them the common privileges and hopes of the gospel. Among the heathen and Mahometans, females are not regarded as immortal beings, but are considered and treated as little better than the beast that perish. What Christian woman can think of this without an earnest desire to do all in her power to rescue as many of her sex as possible from this horrible degradation--to raise them to the possession of the rights of human nature, and to teach them to aspire to all the rights of human nature, and to teach them to aspire to all the present and future felicities, which in the gospel of Christ, are proposed to them, equally with the other sex. [17]

While women may not have aspired to or attained equality through their work in missions they did experience some very apparent benefits. In return for their support of missions, learned how to administer and finance their organizations and broaden their minds. The functions of these congregational level societies centered around two elements: support and education. The types of support were provided through financial, emotional and spiritual means. Financially, the groups raised funds through teas, bazaars, fairs and any other reasonable methods. Emotionally, the groups provided support to the missionaries on

the field through exchanging letters containing encouragement, praise and news from home. Spiritually, the groups offered their support through prayer both by public and private channels.[18]

The educational element of the missionary societies focused on informing themselves and others on mission work and all the aspects involved. This effort included sharing letters from missionaries, providing information about the mission field through newsletters and periodicals, writing and exchanging articles themselves, organizing speakers and cultural sessions on foreign countries and missionary recruitment. The societies were also interested in training as well as recruiting candidates and sometimes even assumed the cost of schooling potential missionaries, especially in the case of medical education.[19]

Some societies even guaranteed certain sums to missionaries. Elizabeth Cady Stanton, raised in the Presbyterian Church, later recalled how she headed an association of young women in her family church whose goal was to raise money to send a man to seminary. Their beneficiary later preached a sermon in the Johnstown, New York Church on woman's inferiority. "As he began his discourse, his patrons, dressed in their Sunday best and seated in the first row of the church, silently rose and marched from the church in protest, with Elizabeth Cady Stanton leading them out."[20]

A woman, writing later in the century, emphasized the value of missionary societies in overcoming the two "great evils" of small country towns and villages in which many were situated.

The evils were narrowness and reticence. These societies would overcome reticence which often concealed some great talents. She explained:

> We are so afraid we shall get snubbed or be called enthusiastic or gushing, that we go on locking up within ourselves kindly impulses and generous deeds and loving works...We can come out of ourselves about missionary matters when we might not in something nearer home...Do not sit in a dumb and dreadful silence ...You would be amazed to see how your powers grow as you use them. One of the surprising things of this last 20 years or less is the way woman's work has brought out quiet, reticent little women .. who find themselves good speakers.[21]

Through learning to pray aloud and speaking in meetings women gained skills in organizing their thoughts, speaking and articulating the needs of others. Speaking to God in a public setting gradually transformed into addressing board members and potential donors. Written petitions of support became editorials and articles in mission publications which fostered publications within mission societies.

Another area of benefit was the broadening of cultural perceptions of small town America. To increase funds and recruit membership, societies sponsored speakers, cultural evenings and distributed literature describing the countries and regions supported by missions. Missionary speakers were always in demand but often not available. Although later in the period, the

novel, Rebecca of Sunnybrook Farm provides insight into parochial attitudes toward foreign countries. One passage describes a visit from a missionary couple from India at the society meeting in which the following comments were whispered during the presentation:

> That's Mrs. Burch on the platform with her husband...She's awful tanned up, ain't she...If you're goin' to save souls seems like you hev to part with your complexion...They're poor as Job's turkey...but if you give'em anything they'd turn right round and give it to the heathen. His congregation up in Parsonfield clubbed together and give him that gold watch he carries. I spose he'd a handed that over too, only heathens always tell time by the sun'n' don't need watches.[22]

Mission periodicals often provided cultural insights through description of foreign lands submitted by missionaries. One entry described types of "carriages" in Japan:

> The "Kango" is a kind of round basket, which has a narrow basket roof over it, along the top of which runs a strong stout pole; one end of the pole resting on the shoulders of the forward coolie, and the other on the coolie behind. This and the "Norimen" were the only carriages known when we first came to Japan. This latter is also suspended from a pole running along the top, but is square, and affords more comfortable sitting room for the traveller....[23]

Another article described the practice of "Burnings for the dead

in China:"

> Coming home from a friends where we had been spending the night, we stopped to look at one of the "burnings for the dead" so common here. It was close to a temple on the opposite side of a stream by which we were walking. The most noticeable objects to be burned were a huge paper horse, and a large covered cart, also made of paper. Numerous packages containing silver ingots, and a variety of other articles, all made of paper, were placed close together underneath and around the cart, ready to be ignited at the proper time. Presently a band of "mourners" clad in white from head to foot, doubtless the nearest relatives of the deceased, came slowly down the street. After seeing that their offerings were properly arranged, they entered the temple to "knock heads" to the gods after which they came out, and kneeling at a safe distance from the five, began to wail. A match was applied to the paper articles and at once the whole were in a blaze. First went the silver money and the curtains of the cart, leaving only two burning wheels to tooter a moment and then fall. Next the noble charger; the big rearing, majestic white paper horse was in flames. After and instant, it too careened and fell, one glowing mass, which the wind scattered far and wide. [21]

The very element that broadened their cultural horizons also provided part of the attraction for mission work. The romance of missions was in part entwined with the mystery and romance of

foreign places.

As mid century passed the structure of these societies began to resemble those of the mission boards. Home and foreign corresponding secretaries handled the bulk of each society's administrative work, implementing decisions made by an executive committee that met weekly or biweekly. They maintained influence over review of candidates' credentials and their assignment to specific stations, and the building and administration of girls schools, hospitals for women and orphanages. The work of the larger urban societies was not so very different from that of their male colleagues on the official boards.[25]

Beginning in the 1870s the women broadened their base of support and set up regional boards that supplied funds and leadership for the mission effort. Covering the entire continent among them the seven women's mission boards were located in Chicago, Philadelphia, New York City, New York State, San Francisco, the Southwest and the Northwest. No two were constituted exactly alike but their goals were the same. Quickly organizing and acquiring auxiliary groups on a local level, the boards grew rapidly in financial and numerical strength. In 1870 the newly constituted Woman's board out of New York City had forty-five auxiliaries in New York state, Pennsylvania, and Ohio as well as the city of New York. They raised $1200 which they used to support Bible readers, educate a child, purchase a boat for mission posts in Africa, build a chapel in Persia, help buy property and build a church in Las Vegas, buy a horse and buggy

for a missionary in Missouri and put a new roof on a church. By 1883 they had voted to support foreign missions exclusively and represented nineteen presbyterial associations, 197 local auxiliaries with cash receipts of the past thirteen years totaling close to $300,000. They also funded twenty-five missionaries, thirty-eight native teachers and twenty schools in eight foreign fields.[26]

The Women's Foreign Missionary Society, another regional organization, was begun in Philadelphia and served Pennsylvania and adjacent states. This society also experienced sizeable organizational growth. During the first months it supported two missionaries. After six months it increased to a dozen. In twelve years the society raised just over $900,000 with forty-eight presbyterials, 1189 local auxiliaries & 758 childrens' bands. By its twenty-five year meeting its receipts totalled $2.5 million. The funds were used to establish mission stations, build schools, homes, and hospitals. They administered the printing of literature in the native languages and began publishing the popular periodicals Women's Work for Women and Childrens Work for Children which was distributed nationwide.[27]

Full time salaried staff positions were created when the societies' business became too complicated and time consuming for part-time volunteers to manage. Home and Foreign secretaries and regional officers became full time organizers. The regional groups sent mostly single women as travelling agents to stir up enthusiasm for the cause and to encourage the local ladies to

band together in auxiliaries. Instructions to one such agent, S.B. Loring, who was hired to tour western Pennsylvania and Ohio, were to visit small places off the railroad. She received her commission in January 1875. Later that year she reported having held 190 meetings and assisted in organizing forty-three auxiliary societies, two sabbath-school missionary associations and two children bands.[28]

Because of the diversity and growing number of these groups the General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church, in 1876 emphasized the need for effective channels of communication between the church's official boards and the various women's organizations. The women's boards which supported foreign missions responded by establishing the Central Committee of Presbyterian Women for Foreign Missions, composed of representatives from each board. Although serving in only an advisory capacity the committee wanted to present a unified effort and combined the publications of each board under one title, Women's Work for Women.[29]

The women's organizations concerned with national missions were directed by the General Assembly in 1878 to establish a central office. Created under the name, Women's Executive Committee, this central office had more than advisory responsibilities. Displaying extraordinary organizational skill from the outset the WEC promoted contributions, disseminated information on schools, produced new programs and recruited missionary personnel. The volunteer officers traveled to the

mission stations; wrote letters to missionaries , teachers and society members. They organized auxiliaries and annual meetings, supplied articles to Rocky Mountain Presbyterian and later began their own periodical, Home Mission Monthly. Originally comprised of forty-five women who were elected by the Board of Home Missions and ratified by the General Assembly, the WEC functioned in an auxiliary capacity to the Board of Home Missions. Operating out of a New York attic they worked out practical lines of authority and disseminated information to the societies. Their emphasis was to provide educational facilities in the west and southwest but gradually their work expanded among immigrant and minority populations in the city, mining districts, and mountain regions. The first year they began with seven volunteer officers, no salaried staff and poor office facilities. They collected more than $11,000 and organized twenty-two synodical committees during the first fiscal year, 1879-1880.[30]

Efforts to raise funds were successfully directed at women on an individual level. Using this method leaders personalized the giving so that local societies knew what specific purpose their dollars were being used. The groups could choose projects with names, locations, photographs, and promises of personal visits from teachers and missionaries. Projects demanded and encouraged the purchase of more school properties, the erection of new buildings and the repair of old edifices which led to increased enrollment and demands for more teachers, books, supplies and equipment. To implement the projects the officers

wrote hundreds of letter annually to teachers, missionaries and local society members. At first the principal writer was the corresponding secretary. F.E. Haines, the secretary for the WEC, did not skimp on her words, in spite of laboriously handwriting the letters. Within the decade the WEC began experimenting with electric pens and the typewriter -years before the Board of Home Missions. Haines also wrote an instruction manual on how to organize and run a society.[31]

The growing fiscal power and influence these organizations demonstrated through their growing funds, that by the turn of the 19th century could not go unrecognized. Mary E. James, second president of the WEC and wife of a member of the US House of Representatives, turned down the offer of an office near the headquarters of the male board members at the 1900 General Assembly. She remarked that she did not care in the least to be where the men were, to which the WEC Secretary added "she does not need any prestige higher than the place she has made for herself and I fancy the big guns will seek her even if she is not quartered in their midst."[32]

These central committees soon created salaried full time positions to administer their programs. Astute business women these professionals adopted modern business practices and functioned along side of their male counterparts. They provided a clear reporting structure from the congregational level up through the presbyterial, synodical and to the central organization.[33]

As the women of the foreign and national missionary societies progressed through the new century they found themselves in a position of not inconsiderable power and influence within the mission work of the church. Consulted on major decisions especially in education and health issues, the women's boards administered operations at the stations they supported, raised large sums of money, compiled reports, published literature. Many church leaders described these boards as more efficient and better managed than the officially constituted boards run by their male counterparts.[34]

An element of control still not available to the women's boards at this point was total power over their funds. There was no treasurer's position. During the successful struggle in the beginning of the century to obtain control over their funds through the establishment of a treasurer for WEC a woman from Michigan wrote:

> I sometimes wonder what the men would accomplish if it were not for the women keeping everlasting at it. I think they all need education along these lines (men of Michigan not excepted) but they are coming on all right [,] it needs time and good hard work by a few persistent women. We must be very decided and yet just in all of our dealing with the Men's board but they must be made to realize about having our business on a more solid basis and in a first class business style.[35]

By 1915 the women's missionary societies could look back

upon their experiences and view a very positive impact. The impact was felt not only by those who benefited from their support, but also by the members themselves, the women of the "rank and file." On the local level women gained through the experience of administering the finances of an organization; organizing the meetings, fund raising, and promotional events; learning to speak publicly and articulate needs both orally and in writing; and widening their horizons through exposure to issues beyond their local community. They were finding and developing a role that did not label them in relation to another being serving a function such as mother, sister, daughter or wife, but as a person acting and interacting as that person. The perception of that identity as a single entity became linked to their accomplishments in a role outside of and separate from the home. These women also came to recognize and support an international bond of sisterhood to other women which was cross cultural, racial and religious. These women may not have been outspoken feminists but their contributions and experiences helped to shape American women's future as they functioned with increasing competence, confidence and ability outside the home.

1.Patricia Hill, The World Their Household (Ann Arbor, MI: U. of Michigan Press: 1985) 3.

2.R. Pearce Beaver, All Loves Excelling (Grand Rapids, MI: William B. Eerdmans Press, 1968), 16.

3.Lois Boyd & R. Douglas Brackenridge, Presbyterian Women, (Westport, CT: Greenwood Press, 1983), 5 and Page Putnam Miller, A Claim to New Roles (Metuchen, NJ: Scarecrow Press, 1985), 1-3.

4.Ibid.

5.Boyd & Brackenridge, Presbyterian Women, 8 and Florence Hayes, Sisters of Dorcas (New York: Board of National Missions, PCUSA, 1952), 141-158 and assessment of the records at the Presbyterian Historical Association.

6.Miller, New Roles, 128

7.Boyd & Brackenridge, Presbyterian Women, 8

8.IBid., 8-12.

9.Miller, New Roles, 128.

10.Ibid.

11.Ibid.

12.Ibid., 183 and Boyd & Brackenridge, Presbyterian Women, 10.

13.Miller, New Roles, 128.

14.Mrs. Baldwin, "Story of Jong Chuo," Our Mission Field, 1(Sept. 1871):21.

15.Foreign Missionary Chronicle 6 (July 1838): 198-199 in Miller, New Roles, 123.

16.Ibid., 125-126.

17.Constitution for the Princeton Female Society for the Support of a Female School in India in Christian Advocate (September 1823) in Miller, New Roles, 128.

18.Hill, Household, 77.

19.Ibid.

20.Boyd & Brackenridge, Presbyterian Women, 12-13.

21.Hill, Household, 77.

22.Ibid., 8.

23.Mrs. Hepburn, "Japanese Carriages," in Our Mission Field 4(October 1875):7.

24.Mrs. Nevius, "Burnings for the Dead in CHina," Our Mission Field 4 (October 1875):6.

25.Hill, Household,61 and boyd & Brackenridge, Presbyterian Women, 30-32.

26.Boyd & Brackenridge, Presbyterian Women, 30.

27.Ibid., 31.

28.Ibid., 37.

29.Ibid.

30.Ibid., 37-41.

31.Ibid.

32.Ibid., 38.

33.Ibid., 38.

34.Arthur Judson Brown, One Hundred Years (New York: Board of Foreign Missions, PCUSA, 1937), 113.

35.Boyd & Brackenridge, Presbyterian Women, 52.